

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (original) Process for the preparation of 2,3-5-trimethyl-1,4-hydroquinone diacylates by reacting ketoisophorone with an acylating agent in the presence of methane trisulfonic acid.
2. (original) A process as in claim 1 wherein the reaction is carried out in the presence of about 0.01 mol% to about 2 mol% of methane trisulfonic acid, based on ketoisophorone.
3. (original) A process as in claim 2 wherein the reaction is carried out in the presence of about 0.1 mol% to about 1 mol% of methane trisulfonic acid, based on ketoisophorone
4. (currently amended) A process as in claim 1 wherein the molar ratio of acylating agent to ketoisophorone is about 10 to 1, ~~preferably about 3 to 1.~~
5. (previously presented) A process as in claim 1 wherein the acylating agent is acetic anhydride.
6. (currently amended) A process as in claim 1 wherein the reaction is carried out at about 0 °C to about 140 °C, ~~preferably at about 20 °C to about 70 °C.~~
7. (previously presented) A process as in claim 1 wherein the 2,3,5-trimethyl-1,4-hydroquinone diester obtained is converted in a manner known per se to  $\alpha$ -tocopherol.
8. (new) A process as in claim 4 wherein the molar ratio is about 3 to 1.
9. (new) A process as in claim 1 wherein the reaction is carried out at about 20°C to about 70°C.